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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 07138 172330Z

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C O R R E C T ED COPY: EO, TAGS, AND SUBJ OMITTED ON ORIG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, GR, FR
SUBJECT: PRINE MINISTER CARAMANLIS/AFP INTERVIEW SPEARHEADS
INTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF FRENCH PRESIDENT'S VISIT

N1. AS THE DATE FOR FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S ARRIVAL HERE ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT (SEPTEMBER 17-21) DREW NEAR, SIGNIFICANT MEDIA PLAY BEGAN OVER THE PAST WEEKEND AND ROSE TO A CRESCENDO ON SEPTEMBER 17. ATHENS PRESS FAIRLY GLOWED WITH OPTIMISM OVER THE BENEFITS FOR GREECE WHICH WOULD EVOLVE FROM THE VISIT, AS THE FOLLOWING SAMPLING OF HEADLINES INDICATES: KATHIMERINI (CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT) "FRANCE ON THE SIDE OF GREECE: DEFENSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES"; ACROPOLIS (CONSERVATIVE) "GISCARD: AID IN ALL SECTORS - EC, WEAPONS, CYPRUS, ECONOMY"; ELEFTHEROS COSMOS (RIGHTIST) "FRENCH SUPPORT SOUGHT BY MR.CARAMANLIS REGARDING COMMON MARKET, CYPRUS AND THE ECONOMY"; VRADYNI

(PRO-GOVERNMENT) "ALLIANCE OF GREECE-XRANCE" - "A REAL FRIEND OF OUR COUNTRY ARRIVES TODAY".

2. ADDITIONALLY, MOST ATHENS NEWSPAPERS ON SEPTEMBER 17 CARRIED LARGE
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FRONT PAGE PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRESIDENT GISCARD WHILE A

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FEW CARRY SPECIAL INSIDE PAGE REPORTS ON THE FRENCH
ECONOMY, INDUSTRY, TRADE, TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS,
ETC. ONE NEWSPAPER MARCHING "OUT OF STEP" ON THE
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY (EXTERIOR)
JOURNAL RIZOSPASTIS WHICH DESCRIBES GISCARD AS
"BEING AN AGENT OF THE FRENCH MONOPOLIES".

3. ON THE CYPRUS QUESTION, TO VIMA (LIBERAL,
OPPOSITION), IN A SPECIAL STORY FILED FROM BONN,
ASSERTS THAT THE FRENCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AHD TOLD GERMAN TV CORRESPONDENTS (AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN BRUSSELS), THAT
GREECE HAD ALREADY MADE CONCESSIONS REGARDING CYPRUS
AND IT IS NOW TURKEY'S TURN TO DO SO. THAT REPORT
ADDITIONALLY SUGGESTS THAT THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER
WILL REITERATE THIS POINT WHILE HE IS IN ATHENS AND
THAT GISCARD HIMSELF MIGHT ALSO STRESS IT.

4. KATHIMERINI, IN A REPORT FROM ITS PARIS CORRESPONDENT, ASSERTS
THERE ARE GREAT POSSIBILITIES FOR CLOSE GREEK-FRENCH COLLABO-
RATION IN DEFENSE MATTERS AND THIS COULD RESULT IN THE
ELIMINATION OF THE TOTAL DEPENDENCE OF GREECE ON THE U.S.
RELEVANT TO TRAINING OF ITS AIRMEN AND OTHER
MILITARY PERSONNEL. IN ADDITION TO PRESS COVERAGE,
BOTH RADIO AND TV HAVE DEVOTED APPRECIABLE ATTTENTION
TO THE GISCARD VISIT.

5. TO SET THE APPROPRIATE WELCOMING TONE FOR THE VISIT,
PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS GAVE A LENGTHY INTERVIEW
TO THE AGENCE FRANCE PRESS (AFP) BUREAU CHIEF IN
ATHENS ON SEPTEMBER 15 THE PRIME MINISTER ASSERTED HE HOLDS
GISCARD IN THE "HIGHEST ESTEEM BOTH AS A STATESMAN AND
A PERSON" AND CHARACTEIZED HIM AS "THE INCARNATION OF
THE EUROPEAN". HE DECLARED THAT GREEK-FRENCH RELATIONS
ARE MORE THAN SATISFACTORY - "THEY ARE TRULY FIRENDLY".

6. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THE GREEK GRATITUDE FOR THE
SUPPORT ALREADY GIVEN GREECE BY FRANCE ON THE
CYPRUS QUESTION. HE INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT FRANCE HAS A
SPECIAL, CONTINUING ROLE TO PLAY BOTH IN ACHIEVING A
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JUST AND HONORABLE SOLUTION TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AS
WELL AS IN AFSISTING IN IMPROVING GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS,
I.E. BECAUSE FRANCE HAS GREAT INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE AND
ALSO MAINTAINS "SPECIAL RELATIONS" WITH THE
MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES. CARAMANLIS ALSO EXPRESSED
HOPE FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS
BETWEEN GREECE AND FRANCE, AND ASSERTED THAT TECHNOLO-
GICAL COOPERATION CAN ALSO CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR

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